

REMARKS

This reply is in response to a final Office Action. The amendments are in response to issues raised in the final office action, and are intended to place the application in condition for allowance, or to at least reduce the issues upon appeal. Entry of this reply is respectfully solicited.

Claims 12, 22, and 28 are currently being amended. Claims 16, 23, and 26-27 are requested to be cancelled. No claims have been added. No new matter is added by way of amendment, as the amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. Applicant expressly reserves the right to timely file continuing applications based upon the canceled subject matter and/or the claims as originally filed.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims , Claims 1-15, 17-20, 22, 24, 25, and 28 will be pending in this application.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging that claims 1-11 and 19-20 are allowed. Applicant also thanks the Examiner for noting that claims 16, 26, and 28, though objected to, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claim(s).

As previously presented, claim 16 had depended from claim 12. In the presently presented claims, claim 12 has been amended to include all of the elements of claim 16. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 is now allowable.

Previously presented claim 27, depended from claim 26, which in turn depended from claim 23, which in turn depended from claim 22. Presently presented claim 22 has been amended to include all of the elements of claims 23, 26, and 27, and Applicant respectfully submits that claim 22 is now allowable.

Claim 28, which previously depended from claim 27, has been amended to depend from claim 22. Applicant submits that claim 28 is now allowable.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,454,807, issued to Jackson ("Jackson '807"). In view of the amendment to claim 12, incorporating all of the elements of claim 16, Applicant submits that this rejection is now moot.

Claims 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,657,550, issued to Daher. In view of the amendment to claim 22 to include all the elements of claims 23, 26, and 27, and the cancellation of claim 23, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

As the rejections of claims 12 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are now moot, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner remove the rejections and allow the application to move forward to issuance.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Jackson '807 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,685,742, also issued to Jackson ("Jackson '742"). In view of the amendment to claim 12, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Jackson '807 in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,025,787, issued to Bryan. In view of the amendment to claim 12, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Jackson '807 in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,022,138, issued to Mashburn. In view of the amendment to claim 12, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Jackson '807 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,019,0792, issued to Cauthen. In view of the amendment to claim 12, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Daher in view of Bryan. In view of the amendment to claim 22, Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot.

As the rejections of claims 13-15, 17, 18, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are now moot, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner remove the rejections and allow the application to move forward to issuance.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

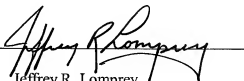
The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date March 9, 2007

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